

# VISION



## NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

JANUARY 2, 2009



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[www.catholicschools-hartford.org](http://www.catholicschools-hartford.org)

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### SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

#### Happy New Year and Happy Catholic Schools Month

Each year the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) provides us with a theme that captures an aspect in the life of Catholic school education. This year's theme is *Celebrate Service*.

We celebrate all those who volunteer their time, talent, and treasure for the service of Catholic school education. We are deeply grateful to our administrators, teachers, and support staff for their service and contributions in educating and forming students.

We are proud that our schools have always been at the forefront in fostering service learning, educating students to apply knowledge, and skills to address the most challenging issues of life in society. Within our schools, we encourage and require service to the Church and community. We form students in the habits of service so they too, like our many school volunteers, will become contributing members of society, capable of addressing real-life needs.

As Archbishop Henry J. Mansell so aptly states, "next to government, Catholic schools are the largest provider of education in the United States." We recognize that Catholic school education is a wonderful service to our Church and our nation.

During this month the Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents, under the direction of John Cattelan, will sponsor two events which will engage parents and students in significant legislative issues, to promote services the State should be willing to provide our schools. (For details, please see page 3 of this edition of Vision!)

Later this month, I will have the honor and privilege to recognize and celebrate several individuals who have provided unconditional service to education, **Msgr. James G. Coleman** and **Ms. Julie Pion**. In addition, **Ms. Lydia Forgetta-Sheffield** will be recognized for 37 years of service as a Pre-Kindergarten teacher at Our Lady of Mercy School, and for being named Distinguished Elementary School Teacher of the New England Region by the NCEA for 2008-2009 – *well-done good and faithful servants*.

This month we will launch the new faith formation program for administrators and teachers with the University of Dayton that supports the strategic direction from Common Threads. Formation in the faith will serve educators well in strengthening the overall mission of Catholic schools.

Common Threads celebrates its first anniversary in January. We will be highlighting this document on the front page of the Office of Catholic Schools' website. I encourage all school personnel, school boards, and home-school association officers to review this document. In addition, each administrator may want to consider linking this document to their school's home webpage during January and February to inform the public of our strategic direction.

*Superintendent's Message Continues:*

The Office of Catholic Schools, with assistance of the elementary and secondary administrators and department chairs, will host a new service to the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Hartford in January – *A Teacher Fair*. This will provide an opportunity to increase the pool of qualified teachers (and perhaps administrative candidates) for employment in the Catholic schools.

May you enjoy this month of celebration, and may the blessings of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, be with you throughout the New Year. **Happy Catholic Schools Month!**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Highlighting our vision that we are Church, we go forth in prayerful gratitude to carry out the mission that Jesus, the greatest of teachers, entrusted to his disciples.*

Please pray for the repose of the soul of **Janet Ramos**, kindergarten aide at St. Brigid School, Elmwood. Mrs. Ramos' warmth and joy blessed each life she touched. May her soul rest in peace!

Congratulations to **Fr. John P. Melnick, Sr. Marie Joann Lewko, CSSF**, and the entire **St. Bernard School Community** on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Bernard School, Enfield. A Mass of Thanksgiving presided by Archbishop Henry J. Mansell will be held on January 11, 2009 at St. Bernard Church.

Congratulations to **Rev. Msgr. Douglas P. Clancy, Mr. Thomas Maynard**, and the entire **St. Mary School Community** on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Mary School, Newington. A Mass of Thanksgiving presided by Archbishop Henry J. Mansell will be held on January 24, 2009 at St. Mary Church.

Congratulations to **Rev. Msgr. James Coleman**, 2008-2009 Distinguished Elementary School Pastor. A Mass will be celebrated on January 25, 2009 at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Waterbury with special recognition given to him by Superintendent Dale R. Hoyt.

Congratulations to **Ms. Julie Pion**, 2008-2009 Distinguished Elementary School Principal. A Mass will be celebrated on January 18, 2009 at St. Mary Magdalen Church, Oakville with special recognition given to her by Superintendent Dale R. Hoyt.

Congratulations to **Deanna Pellegrino**, a sixth grade student at St. James School, Manchester, who was a winner of the Lt. Governor's Second Annual Holiday Card Contest. Lt. Governor Michael Fedele, visited St. James School on Thursday, December 11, 2008, to honor Deanna Pellegrino, whose design depicted a robin, the Connecticut state bird, perched on a decorated tree limb. The robin is holding an ornament with the Connecticut state insignia. Deanna's art will grace the holiday cards sent to residents in her district.

**CATHOLIC IDENTITY**

*Honoring the vision that Catholic Identity is the hallmark of our schools, and our awesome obligation is to ensure that those entrusted to us understand the Gospel message.*

**The Prayer of the Month**, which was written by Gabriella Beaulieu and Katherine Lagasse, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at St. Martha School in Enfield, will be featured on the Office of Catholic Schools' website for January.

**Caritas Christi Center:** This retreat center located at Mount Sacred Heart, 295 Benham Street, Hamden, CT is a ministry of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. For information regarding the various programs this center offers, visit their website at [www.ascjus.org/cc/default.htm](http://www.ascjus.org/cc/default.htm) or call 203.281.2569. Sr. Patricia Cigrand, ASCJ is the Center's Director and she invites administrators and educators to participate in the programs, visit, and/or tour Caritas Christi Center.

**Jubilee Year of St. Paul:** The Office of Religious Education, the Office for Divine Worship, and the Office of the Diaconate, have co-sponsored a workshop in celebration of the Jubilee Year of Saint Paul entitled, *The Conversations of*

*St. Paul.* This workshop will be held on Saturday, January 24, 2009 at the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon. The workshop facilitator is Reverend Frank J. Matera, Ph.D. For details, please contact Patricia Keck at the Office of Religious Education, [info@orehartford.org](mailto:info@orehartford.org) or 860.243.9465. Registration deadline is January 20; fee is \$10.00 (The fee is not applicable to priests, deacons and deacons' wives.)

## **ADMINISTRATION**

*Recognizing our vision that we build community, serve others, and  
bridge the crossroads of faith and knowledge for our students.*

### **Administrative Openings:**

#### ***For the 2009-2010 School Year:***

- St. Augustine School, Hartford
- Sacred Heart School, New Britain
- Academy of Our Lady of Mercy Laurelton Hall, Milford (President Opening)

**Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents Participate in Effort to Advocate for Tax Credit:** The Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents has joined forces with Connecticut's private and religious schools to form the *Parents for Education Reform*. This organization is a coalition of families, urban Mayors, and organizations from across Connecticut supporting a proposal that would provide new educational opportunities for low and middle-income children.

The proposal would offer tax incentives to companies wishing to get involved in the business of helping improve education. This program would provide immediate help to lower and middle-income children, do no harm to public schools, and save the taxpayers of Connecticut an estimated \$5 million per year.

More specifically, this proposal would provide tax credits to "C" Corporations making scholarship donations so that low and middle income children in underperforming school districts can attend a private, religious or out-of-district public school.

The State of Connecticut would provide up to \$5 million in tax credits and companies would be limited to donating \$50,000 in any calendar year to receive a 100% tax credit. Additionally, only children from families who reside in distressed municipalities and whose income does not exceed three times the income requirements for the free lunch program would be eligible for the scholarships.

Similar programs across the country have generated support from both political parties, helped tens of thousands of children, and have led to increased student success and parental satisfaction. Five states – Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island – provide tax credits to corporations that donate to a scholarship fund. In these five states, a tax credit program allowed more than 68,000 students to attend a private or religious school in 2005-06 and over \$132 million was provided in scholarship funds in 2007.

This program could be of tremendous assistance to the children of Connecticut who find themselves trapped in continually underperforming schools.

Representatives from the *Parents for Education Reform* have appeared on talk radio shows to promote this proposal and other public relation efforts are being undertaken as well. The week of January 5, 2009 has been designated Catholic Schools Civics week by Connecticut's three Catholic school Superintendents. During this week, Catholic school students and parents will be asked to write letters to Governor M. Jodi Rell and members of Connecticut General Assembly requesting their support for this tax credit proposal.

Additionally, on January 12, 2009, a press conference will be held at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford to announce the specifics of this proposal and the leaders of this coalition. The press conference is scheduled for 10:00 am.

The events will conclude with our second annual Catholic Schools Day at the State Capitol on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. Catholic school students, parents, teachers and administrators from all across Connecticut will have the opportunity to meet with legislators and discuss the tax credit proposal on this day.

The private and religious schools of this state save the taxpayers over \$700 million a year. However, during the past 10 years our attendance at Catholic schools alone has declined by over 8,000 students costing the taxpayers in excess of \$90 million. Just this year alone our private and religious schools have seen their enrollment decrease by 3% costing the taxpayers of Connecticut \$12 million. .

With Connecticut facing a budget deficit and a slowing economy, lawmakers in Connecticut must create ways to improve education and assist our private and religious schools. Government at all levels, acting in partnership with parents, has a responsibility to provide adequate resources to assist all children who wish to attain a quality education.

#### Save these Dates:

- **Catholic Schools Civics Week, January 5 – 9:** All Catholic school students and their parents will be asked to write letters to the Governor and their state legislators requesting support of legislation that affects our Catholic schools. In the past two years, students and parents have written over 8,000 letters.
- **Press Conference, January 12:** At a press conference at the Legislative Office Building, the Connecticut Federation of Catholic School Parents will announce a Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship Program, and a coalition in support of this proposal. All are invited to attend.
- **Catholic Schools Day, Legislative Office Building, January 22:** Last year, over 200 students, parents, and teachers attended this event at the Legislative Office Building. We hope to double the attendance in 2009.

**Lay Ministry Agreements:** The Lay Ministry Agreements have been temporarily removed from the Office of Catholic Schools' website pending the approval of the revised and/or new policies. Once approved, the agreements will be aligned to reflect the revisions.

**Criminal Background Checks:** There is a new statute governing criminal background checks, requiring changes to the fingerprint cards. The spaces marked "Important – Applicant for" and/or "Reason Fingerprinted" should now be filled in with "Adam Walsh Act". Please make corrections to your fingerprint cards before submitting them to the Office of Catholic Schools.

**International Students:** After the Christmas vacation, principals are reminded to confirm with Larry Duffany, the return of students with F-1 Visas.

### CURRICULUM

*Providing vision of education for a lifetime where faith and knowledge intertwine  
to form person-centered learning communities.*

**Archdiocesan Technology Award:** As our diocese moves more fully into instructional technology, we want to encourage all our schools to think about submitting an authentic and creative sample of a lesson that integrates technology to promote students' achievement. A panel of instructional technology coordinators and principals will review each lesson as a blind submittal. One school will be awarded in May, and all submitted lesson plans will be posted on the curriculum page of the Archdiocesan website as a resource for all schools. The deadline for submitting a lesson plan is April 10, 2009. Please submit lesson plans to Valerie Mara at [VMara@adh-ocs.org](mailto:VMara@adh-ocs.org).

**2009 Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program:** The Office of Catholic Schools is proud to announce that fourteen teachers, representing six of our Catholic elementary schools, will be participating in a program entitled "Using Lesson Study to Develop Elementary Mathematics Teacher Leaders" that is being offered by Albertus Magnus College in New Haven. Over the course of the next year, these teachers will attend several workshops including a summer institute, engage in joint planning activities, visit each other's classrooms, and discuss their observations. The goal of the program is to further develop teaching skills, and content knowledge in the area of math.

**Criterion Referenced Assessments for Elementary Schools:** The best way to determine student achievement based on our Archdiocesan curriculum is to assess what the students are actually learning in our classrooms. We have researched three companies who are willing to pilot an online criterion referenced assessment at no charge. Fifteen schools that represent diverse geographical locations of the Archdiocese will be invited to have their fifth grade class participate in this pilot program. The time span to administer these assessments is a regular forty-minute class period. More information will follow.

**Knights of Columbus Spelling Bee:** In October, the Knights of Columbus mailed each principal a packet regarding the annual Spelling Bee for students in grades four, five, and six. Please note that the date and location of the State Final has changed to Sunday, April 26, 2009, at St. Anthony Church in Prospect. Individual schools are asked to notify Ron Scoville, the State Chairman, no later than December 23 of their intention to participate. Winners' names at the school level should be forwarded to Mr. Scoville no later than January 23, 2009, so that regional competitions can be scheduled in February and March. We encourage all of our schools to participate. For more information, contact Ron Scoville at 860-745-6541, or Larry Duffany at the Office of Catholic Schools at 860.242.4362, or [lduffany@adh-ocs.org](mailto:lduffany@adh-ocs.org).

**Teacher Technology Resource:** Starfall.com is a *free* on-line service that helps children to learn to read. It includes ABC animations, animated interactive books, and other reading exercises. There are also materials that may be downloaded such as handouts for classroom use. This site is ideal for preschool, kindergarten, and first grade classrooms. The site is completely free of advertisements.

### ADVANCEMENT

*Building our vision of understanding that Catholic schools must be supported by expanding our efforts in development, marketing, and support from business and civic communities.*

**Inquiry and Source Report:** Presidents and principals will be asked to submit the next Periodic Inquiry and Source Report (**due February 6**) for the months of October through January. Please remember to compile your school's inquiry data for those months in order to track the success of school and Archdiocesan marketing efforts.

**Website Resources:** Please help us compile a referral list of website resources to assist our network of schools. Presidents and principals are requested to submit names and contact information for those individuals and companies that have been successfully utilized in the creation, hosting, and management of school web sites. You are asked to share your contact information by emailing Anne Clubb at [clubb@adh-ocs.org](mailto:clubb@adh-ocs.org) by **January 12<sup>th</sup>**.

**High School Collection Alert:** Presidents and principals are reminded that the High School Collection will be taken in all parishes of the Archdiocese of Hartford on the weekend of January 17/18, 2009. Every pastor in the Archdiocese has received a letter from the Superintendent requesting support for the collection. In addition, they have been sent posters for display in their parish, calling attention to the collection. These posters will also be sent to each elementary and secondary school, and we ask that you post them prominently in order to raise public awareness of and support for this important collection.

### FINANCES

*Establishing a vision of responsibility to continue to strive toward the goal of making Catholic elementary and secondary schools available, accessible, and affordable to all parents and their children.*

**Preliminary Elementary Budget Template:** The Preliminary Budget template and supporting documents for 2009/2010 is now posted to the Office of Catholic Schools' website. If you have any questions regarding the template, please contact Jim Giangreco at 860.242.4362, ext. 139, or via email at [JLGiangreco@adh-ocs.org](mailto:JLGiangreco@adh-ocs.org). Preliminary Budgets are due Monday, February 16, 2009.

**Projected Cash Position for Schools:** Now is the time to project (estimate) your cash for the coming months, through June 30, 2009. **Please visit the OCS website at [www.catholicsschoolshartford.org](http://www.catholicsschoolshartford.org) for a copy of the "Cash Flow Template" to assist in this computation.** The basic components of the computation are as follows:

- Determine Cash as of January 1, 2009
- Determine Receivables as of January 1, 2009

- Determine Tuition yet to be billed for the school year
- Of the two tuition components, determine how much will be collected between now and June 30, 2009. **This total is the "Cash Available" for the rest of the school year.**
- Subtract from Cash Available salaries, benefits, and all other expenses for the rest of the year.
- The balance is the cash available (or shortage) at June 30, 2009.

In these economic times, it is advisable to be keenly aware of where you are concerning cash flow in order to have sufficient time to respond to any shortage. Contact Ken Przysiecki, CPA, Director of School Finances, at [kprzysiecki@adh-ocs.org](mailto:kprzysiecki@adh-ocs.org) or his assistant, Jim Giangreco, at [jgiangreco@adh-ocs.org](mailto:jgiangreco@adh-ocs.org), or 860-242-4362 for any assistance.

## DUE DATES

### NOW DUE

**Compilation Reports for 2007/2008** to Ken Przysiecki via [jgiangreco@adh-ocs.org](mailto:jgiangreco@adh-ocs.org)

### JANUARY

- 12 Website Resource Information** to Anne Clubb at [aclubb@adh-ocs.org](mailto:aclubb@adh-ocs.org)
- 31 Asbestos Semi-Annual (Six Month) Inspection Report** mail to Leslie Nelson and retain copy in the School's Management Plan

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JANUARY

- 1—31 Catholic Schools Month, Archdiocese of Hartford**
- 5—9 Catholic Schools Civics Week**, Letter Writing Campaign to Governor and State Legislators
- 12 Press Conference to Announce Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship**, Legislative Office Building, Hartford
- 14 Secondary Administrators Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- 14 Foundation for the Advancement of Catholic Schools**, Trustees Meeting, Chancery, 4:00 p.m.
- 17—18 High School Collection**, All Parishes in the Archdiocese of Hartford
- 19 Martin Luther King Day (Office of Catholic Schools Closed)**
- 22 Catholic Schools Day for Students and Parents**, Legislative Office Building, Hartford, All day event
- 24 The Conversations of St. Paul Workshop**, the Archdiocesan Center at St. Thomas Seminary, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon
- 29 Catholic School Teachers Fair**, Northwest Catholic High School, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

### FEBRUARY

- 5 New Administrators Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- 12 Principals' Advisory Council for Elementary (PACE) Schools Meeting**, Office of Catholic Schools, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., followed by lunch
- 16 Presidents' Day (Office of Catholic Schools Closed)**
- 23 Executive Meeting of the Archdiocesan School Board**, Office of Catholic Schools, 5:30 p.m.

**The mission of the Office of Catholic Schools is to further the advancement of Catholic education for students in the Archdiocese of Hartford by providing service, support, guidance, and direction to pastors, presidents, principals, teachers, boards, parents, and other stakeholders of Catholic schools.**

*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.*  
-John 1:14